

Inspection of Forest Hills Primary School

School Road, Rugeley, Staffordshire WS15 2PD

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Powell. The school is part of Perry Hall Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Amarjit Cheema, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Brocklehurst. There is also an executive headteacher, who is responsible for this school and five others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and staff share the view that Forest Hills is a happy and safe school. The school community has been through significant changes and is proud of the improvements that have been made. In addition, the school also has a detailed understanding of the further improvements that still need to be made.

Leaders, in partnership with the trust, have changed the curriculum to help pupils build more successfully on their prior learning. This curriculum is beginning to enable pupils to make better progress. However, parts of the curriculum are not fully embedded, which limits the progress of some pupils.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength. They learn without distraction and have positive relationships with one another. Parents report that poor behaviour no longer affects their children's learning. Pupils feel confident that, should they have any worries, they could share them with a trusted adult, who would support them.

Pupils understand the importance of being active in their community. Leaders provide many opportunities for them to show kindness to others. Singing at events and raising money for charities prepare pupils to be good citizens. It is an exciting time to be part of this school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

There have been some very positive improvements to the education of pupils at Forest Hills over the last three years. However, the improved curriculum has only recently been introduced due to significant staffing changes, and it will take time for pupils to close gaps in their knowledge. An important first step in improving pupils' learning was to make sure that they were engaged in what they were learning. They are.

Where subjects are more established, the impact on what pupils know and remember is evident. For example, in mathematics, the school have mapped out the content pupils will learn. Staff use assessment well to identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning. Revisiting of previous learning helps important knowledge stick in pupils' memories. However, this is not yet consistent practice across all subjects.

The school's approach to the teaching of reading is developing. Staff choose books to enrich the curriculum and develop pupils' vocabulary. Regular reading sessions help pupils to understand the meaning of what they read. Pupils now enjoy sharing stories with their teachers. Leaders have recently improved the teaching of phonics. As soon as they start in Reception, children practise saying and writing the sounds they are learning. Across the school, staff now keep a closer eye on pupils who are not keeping up with the pace of the programme. However, some weaker readers are still struggling to sound out words they encounter. This prevents them from developing into fluent readers quickly.

The school has recently developed a new curriculum in the early years. However, this has only just been introduced. Recent changes to the learning environment have helped to support children's learning more effectively. Staff development has also contributed to improved learning. However, the new curriculum, and further work needed to develop the early years provision, means that children are not achieving as well as they should to prepare them for key stage 1.

Senior leaders and the trust work closely and effectively with leaders at all levels. They provide effective training and coaching for less experienced staff. However, due to significant changes in the leadership team, the school is still developing all leaders' expertise and understanding of how to check how well their curriculum and provision is supporting pupils' learning and progress.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support to access the curriculum and make progress. Pupils with SEND learn the same subjects as their classmates. Leaders have supported staff in adapting the curriculum to meet their needs. Well-trained staff support pupils with SEND, providing high-quality academic and pastoral care. The school works well with outside support agencies and is working to engage parents more fully in the review of support plans for pupils with SEND.

Leaders provide pupils with a range of experiences beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils are proud to belong to the school council and eco-teams. They carry out these roles sensibly and feel that their voice is important. They get to vote on the clubs that are run. These include a range of sports, 'green gang', coding and den building. Pupils learn the importance of respect and tolerance towards those with different beliefs to their own. All pupils know the school's 'FOREST' core values and demonstrate the value of respect in their interactions with others.

Trustees and governors know what is working well and what needs to improve. Staff report that they feel proud to work at this school and want to do their best for the community they serve. Leaders and governors work well with staff to support their workload and have developed a strong team to take this school forward.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new approach to the teaching of reading is not fully embedded. As a result, some pupils have not developed the reading skills they should have. The school should continue to implement and embed the new reading approach to ensure

that all pupils learn correct letter sounds, read accurately and develop into fluent readers.

- The previous curriculum was not sufficiently well designed to ensure that pupils build successfully on their prior knowledge. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge across a range of subjects. The school should continue to implement its new, effective curriculum to ensure that pupils close gaps in their knowledge and make good progress.
- Until recently, there has been staffing instability and lack of curriculum development in the early years. This means children in the early years have not achieved as well as they should. The school should continue its effective work to redevelop the early years provision to ensure that all children make good progress.
- There have been significant staffing changes over the last three years, especially in leadership. This has hindered the development of the leadership team. The school, in partnership with the trust, should continue to develop leadership so that the school continues to build on the improvements already implemented.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148061
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10290672
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Brocklehurst
Headteacher	Sarah Powell
Website	www.foresthillsprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Perry Hall Multi-Academy Trust, in the West Midlands. It joined the trust in November 2020.
- There have been several changes in staffing since the school opened. The headteacher took up post in September 2020.
- A local governing board has delegated responsibilities for the quality of education and safety of pupils at this school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are point-in-time judgements about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other school staff, trustees, members of the local governing board and staff from the trust. In addition, the inspectors talked to the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also met with curriculum leaders and looked more widely at documentation in topic books.
- The team inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss how leaders support their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments, and responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Antony Bradshaw, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ann Pritchard	His Majesty's Inspector

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